



April 4, 2014

This week's edition includes important information I want to share with you:

- **Autism Awareness Month:** The Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network estimates 1 in 68 children have been identified with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Further, ADDM notes ASD is almost five times more common among boys (1 in 42) than among girls (1 in 189). April has been designated as a month to raise awareness of this important issue and many have joined in the fight to advocate for persons with ASD and their families. For information on how you can contribute to this cause, please visit Autism NOW: The National Autism Resource and Information Center [here](#). An Autism Fact Sheet from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention is also attached to this edition for your reference. If interested in attending local events to celebrate Autism Awareness Month, please click [here](#).
- **East Employment and Day Services Coordinator:** Please welcome Virginia “Ginny” Howe as the new Employment and Day Services Coordinator for the East Tennessee Regional Office (ETRO). Some of her responsibilities will entail meeting with community rehabilitation providers to assist and provide support relating to Employment and Day Services, as well as conducting the East Tennessee Employment Consortium. Prior to DIDD employment, Ginny worked for five years in long-term care. In addition, she holds a master's degree in Therapeutic Recreation and is a licensed Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. With the department's ongoing *Employment First* efforts, we are certain Ginny will be a valued asset to our team. Ginny can be reached at Ginny.Howe@tn.gov or 865-588-0508, ext. 163.
- **Obtaining Bids for Environmental Accessibility Modifications (EAM):** In the new DIDD Provider Manual, Section 13.17.d., it states the Independent Support Coordinator (ISC) or Case Manager shall obtain three (3) competitive bids from qualified EAM providers when the amount exceeds limits set forth by the State Purchasing Division. The limit currently in place through the State Purchasing Division is \$10,000.00. Therefore, when the cost of the first bid for needed modifications is \$9,999.00 or less, additional competitive bids will not be required. If the cost of the first bid is \$10,000.00 or over, two (2) additional competitive bids will be required unless the criteria for an exemption to the three bid process as outlined in Section 13.17.d. is applicable. Please contact Karen Wills, State Director of Therapeutic Services, at 615-532-3063 if you have any questions.
- **An Ounce of Prevention:** This week's topic is Tennessee's False Claims Act. Per this statute, those who knowingly submit or cause another person or entity to submit false claims for payment of government funds, are liable for three times the government's damages plus civil penalties of \$5,500 to \$25,000 per false claim. The Program Integrity unit within the Bureau of TennCare manages and guides the Bureau's efforts pertaining to this Act. Providers have the responsibility and opportunity to perform self-audits and report overpayments. When applicable, overpayments must be returned to TennCare within 60 days from the date

overpayment is identified. For purposes of this article, it needs to be stressed that overpayments which are not returned within 60 days from the date overpayment was identified, can trigger a liability under the False Claims Act. For more information and the TennCare policy regarding the False Claims Act, please view TennCare's Program Integrity page [here](#).

- **Person Centered Practices in Action:** Tracy's life drastically improved when she quit smoking, obtained a community job and became more active with her family as a result of her Person Centered Planning (PCP) meetings. Tracy, pictured at right, began PCP meetings with her Circle of Support (CoS) and has been able to learn more about herself and become more involved in her meetings. The PCP process allowed Tracy to learn more about what was missing in her life, which she described as family interaction and consistent income from a community job. Tracy is now currently employed four days a week, working out with a trainer in hopes of losing weight and spending time with her family.



Envision, Inc. was excited for the opportunity to be a part of Tracy's meetings. The format of these meetings allowed each member of the CoS, including Tracy, to participate and address each aspect of her current life and the future life she desired. Tracy's restrictive Behavior Support Plan (BSP) has been decreased to a regular BSP and she may not even need behavior services in the near future. Tracy's meetings have also helped her establish a stronger friendship bond with her housemate, co-workers and friends as well as increase rapport with her consistent staff, CoS and others in the community. Envision, Inc. was able to learn more about Tracy through the PCP process and the supports needed to help her have the best quality of life possible. They have enjoyed watching and assisting Tracy as she's made positive changes throughout each step of the process!

- **Conservatorship/Guardianship Services Opportunities:** The Department of General Services Central Procurement Office has announced that Request for Qualifications (RFQ) # 34401-00430 for Conservatorship/Guardianship Services is open for bid. This RFQ and other procurement opportunities are available [here](#). All times indicated in the Schedule of Events are in Central Standard Time. All communications regarding this RFQ should be addressed to: Amber O'Connell, Sourcing Analyst, Central Procurement Office at Department of General Services (WRS Tennessee Tower, 3rd Floor, 312 Rosa L. Parks Ave., Nashville, 37243) or Amber.OConnell@tn.gov.
- **Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) Training:** The department, in collaboration with TN Career Centers, Workforce Essentials, Inc. and South Central Workforce Alliance, are bringing Subject Matter Experts from the Social Security Administration's PASS Cadre to provide training on PASS Plans and Work Incentives for persons with disabilities who receive Social Security (SSI/ SSDI) or concurrent benefits.

PASS allows a person with a disability to set aside otherwise countable income and/or resources for a specific period of time to achieve a work goal. Any person who receives SSI benefits or who might qualify for SSI, or any person receiving SSDI (or a similar benefit) and could qualify for SSI, may be able to have a PASS. There is no limit to the number of successful PASS Plans a person may use in a lifetime.

Supported Employment (SE) services may be funded using a PASS because SE increases the potential for self-support. "Increased self-support" in most PASS plans implies an increase in earnings and a decrease in SSI/SSDI benefits. In Supported Employment PASS Plans, your vocational goal may be to maintain your supported employment position, including increasing hours worked and reducing job coaching hours.

The training will be held May 7 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Northfield Workforce Development and Conference Center (5700 Main St, Spring Hill, 37174). Space is limited to 50 and participants are requested to bring their own lunch. To register, click [here](#). Please contact Suzy Pruitt, Disability Resource Coordinator, at 615-337-8169 for more information.

- **Health Resources:** The West Tennessee Regional Office (WTRO) assesses, reviews and analyzes data specific to Administrator on Duty (AOD) reporting and hospitalizations. Based on these reviews, WTRO nursing staff have identified three prevalent concerns for persons supported in the West Region: aspiration pneumonia, bowel obstruction and dehydration. In an effort to promote optimal health and minimize risks for people we support, the WTRO Nursing Department developed flyers they wish to share with others as an educational opportunity or teaching tool for providers to utilize with their staff. The flyers are attached to this edition.
- **Measuring Financial Capability of Persons with Disabilities:** On April 9, join National Disability Institute (NDI) and Bank of America as they discuss measuring the financial capability of persons with disabilities from 3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. EST. Financial Capability is defined as building knowledge and skills for informed decision making about budgeting, money management, credit, debt and savings that lead to tangible improvements in an individual's financial health and stability. It is often measured by whether consumers can cover monthly expenses with income, track spending, plan ahead, save for the future and effectively navigate, select and manage financial products and services. For persons with disabilities, there are additional indicators to be considered when measuring financial capability. This webinar will identify NDI's Financial Capability Indicators for persons with disabilities and explore new tools and strategies that organizations can use to improve the financial capability of persons with disabilities. Click [here](#) to register. Please note real-time captioning will be provided for this webinar. For other accommodation requests, questions about the webinar or registration process, contact Keith Combs at kcombs@ndi-inc.org.
- **Employment First Community of Practice Webinars:** The April 21 session on organizational assessment, diversifying funding streams and collecting data to measure progress is now full. However, openings are still available May 12 from 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. CST. Registration is limited to 25 participants and is on a first-come, first-serve basis. The webinar will be facilitated by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) Thomas Macy and Nancy Gurney. To RSVP, please contact Betty Chester at Betty.Chester@tn.gov by May 5 at 4:00 p.m. CST.

Be safe and have a great weekend!

~Debbie